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ABSTRACT

The Male Adolescent Program for Positive Sexuality (MAPPS) is involved in the assessment and treatment, both individual and group, of adolescent sex offenders throughout Victoria (Australia). MAPPS clients comprise a heterogeneous group in relation to type of offence, backgrounds, denial, and individual development. To achieve a match between the adolescent and the stage of the "change process" he is in, the program is separated into two groups, basic and advanced. The move to the advanced group involves shifting from identifying patterns of offending to accepting or controlling the feelings associated with offending, including processing the affective states of their victims. Because this is a difficult step for some clients to make, a 4-day adventure therapy program was developed to facilitate the transition by celebrating client achievements to date, engaging clients through a challenging experience, and fostering their ability to cope with intense emotional experiences. Since the nature of adventure therapy makes it difficult to control extraneous variables, evaluations combine qualitative and quantitative measures to detect individual change relative to client reviews conducted prior to the transition program. The daily activities, ethos, process, and staffing of the transition program are described, and 13 lessons that have been learned and matters still to be resolved are discussed. (TD)

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Integrating Adventure Therapy into an Adolescent Sex Offender Program

By Darren Eger & Scott Kilby

Abstract

Since its inception, four years ago, the Male Adolescent Program for Positive Sexuality (MAPPS) has been involved in the assessment and treatment (individual and group) of adolescent sex offenders throughout Victoria. MAPPS has a philosophy of program delivery that attempts to match individual client needs with delivery mode. As a result, many modalities are used to achieve a match between the adolescent and the stage of the 'change process' they are in. Such modalities include cognitive behavioural techniques, drama therapy, art therapy, as well as the adventure therapy component. Adventure therapy has been incorporated into the MAPPS group program as a bridging or 'Transition program' between two key and distinct phases of the overall MAPPS group program. The process of incorporating adventure therapy into a multi-disciplinary, multi-modal program and associated costs and benefits will be discussed. Evaluating the adventure therapy component itself and its merit within the broader treatment program including the evaluation model will be reviewed. Adventure therapy is proving to be a valuable additional component in the treatment of adolescent sex offenders. Future refinement of innovative evaluation strategies should support this experience and refine its use with this client group.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to outline the way that adventure therapy or our preferred term, Experiential Therapy, became an intrinsic component in the Male Adolescent Program for Positive Sexuality (MAPPS). We will discuss some of the issues that we encountered and those issues we are still trying to resolve particularly program evaluation.

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During the early 1990's Australia was coming to terms with the existence of adolescents who commit sexual offences. Adolescents have always committed sexual offences, but these have often been overlooked and dismissed as 'adolescent experimentation'. The program was founded, as a result of three needs. First, the community expected a response to the problem of recidivist sexual offenders. Second, a recognition that early intervention with sex offenders was effective (Becker, Harris and Sales, 1993). Third, a greater emphasis was being placed on Juvenile Justice to provide offence specific programmes.

MAPPS initially drew its model from the work of Ray Wyre, Gracewell Centre (now the Faithful Foundation) in the UK., Michael O'Brien and the Program for Healthy Adolescent Sexual Expression (PHASE) in Minnesota, and Jonathan Ross and the Waypoint program in South Carolina. These influences were shaped by local expertise to establish the MAPPS program.

MAPPS first began receiving referrals in May 1993. At the time, a review of the literature revealed that adolescent sex offenders were being included in wilderness programmes. However, adolescent sex offenders were not specifically targeted for intervention by these programmes. MAPPS believes that adolescent sex offenders are unlike other young people who commit offences. Unlike other offences committed by adolescents, sexual offences are characterised by a persistent pattern of behaviour that increases in severity and intensity over time. While most other types of adolescent offending behaviour dissipates with maturation.

The MAPPS program was designed utilising a cognitive behavioural framework. From the outset, the therapeutic team was chosen for its breadth of experience and therapeutic backgrounds. MAPPS has drawn knowledge from Drama Therapy, Art Therapy, Psychology, Social Work, Psychiatry, and adventure therapy. Without these diverse areas of expertise, the MAPPS cognitive behavioural framework would be limited. MAPPS is a dynamic program aiming to offer the most effective range of interventions to adolescents who commit sexual offences. As a result of these influences, MAPPS has evolved into a focussed, offence specific program aimed at intervening at the earliest opportunity to decrease the incidence of sexual abuse in the community.

Change Process

The dynamic nature of the MAPPS program has resulted in the program evolving from its inception as a single, unstructured, open group. The Gracewell Clinic described a change process that their clients (adult, male sex offenders) commonly went through in treatment. A similar process was observed by the MAPPS program. That is, how to deal with an open group model and clients who were at different stages of the change process. There proved to be therapeutic benefits from having therapeutically advanced clients work through the denial and distorted cognitions of the newer clients. However, often the benefits were outweighed by the disadvantages associated with the damage done to the culture or ethos of the group. Advanced clients would report frustration at being held up by the newer clients. Consequently the program was restructured to reflect this process. The program now offers a phased, structured open group program. The five phases are outlined below in Figure 1.

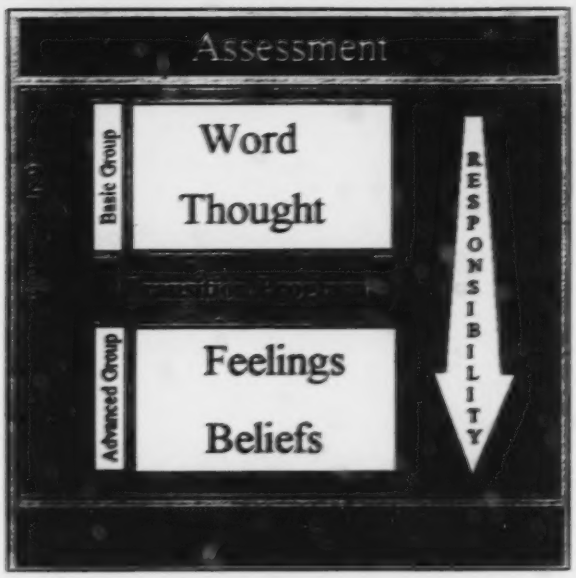

Figure 1. Five phases of the MAPPS program model incorporating change process.

Phase one: Assessment.

All young people convicted on a sexual offence are referred to MAPPS for specialist assessment. The primary aims of the assessment are to determine risk to the community and amenability to treatment.

Phase two: Basic group.

Basic Group runs as a fourteen-week loop focussing primarily on information and issues associated with control and boundaries. In Basic Group, the language used by the clients is challenged. Links to distorted cognitions are made and the distortions identified are linked to patterns of offending.

Phase three: Transition program.

The Transition Program is the most recent addition to the MAPPS program. It aims to recognise treatment progress and prepare clients for the next major stage of treatment, the underlying feelings and issues associated with their offending behaviour.

Phase four: The advanced group.

Advanced Group operates on a 30-week cycle and is process driven. In order to achieve long term change, clients must believe in their own ability to control their behaviour rather than rely on external controls. As part of that process, they need to be able to either accept or control the feelings associated with their offending. Of greater importance, they need to identify the feelings that will prevent them from committing further offences and prove to themselves that such internal control is possible.

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Phase five: Relapse prevention.

The final stage of the program is tailored to the specific needs of each client. It involves the development of a relapse prevention plan (Gray & Pithers, 1993) involving the clients support network in maintenance and follow-up. The benefits of this structure are continually being assessed. Anecdotally, clients report significant benefits to the focus of their work and the culture in which it occurs. The therapeutic staff reports that the structure provides more incentive for progression and permits the development of a group curriculum that is specific to the developmental needs of each group. Until the Transition Program was incorporated, the move from the Basic Group to the Advanced Group was problematic. One of the major difficulties was the shift in culture from a controlled, content driven environment, to a process driven group with greater reliance on the client's own internal controls. MAPPS required a method for altering the perceptions and mindset of the clients as they made the transition. The method had to be intense yet remains within the resource limitations of the program.

Transition Program Rationale - Why use it at all?

Whilst the treatment of adolescent sex offenders is currently receiving increased attention by researchers, there is a dearth of empirically valid research that supports the variety of programmes currently on offer. However, research (Borduin, Henggeler, Blaske, and Stein, 1990) and expert clinical opinion suggest that programmes that are multisystemic and multi-modal are more effective. An additional qualitative advantage that this approach offers is the variety and intensity of experiences that treatment programmes, such as MAPPS, can offer. A program that offers adolescents a variety of ways to learn about and experience change is more likely to engage the clients and deal with their differing developmental stages and intellectual abilities.

Whilst MAPPS uses experiential techniques throughout the program, the Transition Program aims lent themselves to the experiential approach. The Transition Program aims to establish the extent of each client's 'feeling vocabulary' and then to expand it. The tasks associated with the Advanced Group (refer to Figure 1) involve processing the affective states of participants, their victims, and other group members.

The Transition Program also aims to celebrate their achievements to date and their ability to cope with intense emotional experiences. To meet these aims within the confines of a weekly community based program were considered to be problematic and time consuming. Therefore, an intensive experience was considered. Initially, residential settings were employed using Art Therapy mixed with more traditional group work. These were successful for some clients but lacked the variety and intensity to engage all of the clients. It seemed that we were most successful when we were able to shift them from their comfort zones. Until this shift was achieved, staff had little to process and work with. Something that offered a greater intensity of experience was required.

Therapeutic Toolchest

A review of the adventure therapy literature revealed a wide range of approaches and programmes. However, a common theme appeared to emerge. Many of the programmes described were offered as interventions in their own right. For example, a review of the Proceedings of the First National Symposium on Outdoor/Wilderness Programmes for Offenders (1991) indicated that many of the programmes described were being offered to populations with a common association (e.g., young offenders, jobless, and socially disadvantaged). The purpose of these programmes was often linked to a generic aim or aims focussing on personal development (ie. self esteem). It seemed that Adventure/Wilderness therapy was a solution in search of a problem. This is not as a criticism but rather a reflection of the evolutionary process. Programmes in most fields tend to move towards clinical consensus before the process of empirical validation has begun in earnest.

MAPPS chose to use experiential therapy as a solution to our problem; the need to provide a range of intense emotionally charged experiences in a short period of time. The information obtained from each client would be used to determine what his or her baseline affective vocabulary was, and what deficits existed. The results would then guide Advanced Group staff as the clients moved into that phase. Adventure therapy was chosen in an attempt to balance experiential therapy with the other therapeutic interventions used in the program.

MAPPS is a multidisciplinary program. No single professional approach dominates nor any therapeutic process. Knowledge and strategies are likened to have a good range of tools at your disposal. Often a specific approach is required to meet the particular need of the client. Therefore, we decided to add experiential therapy to the MAPPS toolchest.

The Transition Program

The Transition Program is evolving as our experience grows and from the increasing body of research. To date, no two Transition Programmes have been run the same way. No sooner have we packed away the equipment than the lessons learned are being identified and documented. The changes to be made are incorporated in the next program design. What follows is a description of what we plan to do next time. Structurally, the changes have been small, however they have been numerous.

A four-day outdoor based experience program was chosen as a compromise between a week long program and a weekend. All Transition Programmes are held over an extended weekend including Friday and Monday. This way there is minimal interruption to the set routines in client's day to day lifestyle (e.g. work or school, as required by legislation).

In the lead up to the Transition Program, clients are tested for swimming ability, given some basic instruction in roping techniques and provided with an outline of activities and what they will be expected to bring. Clients are also given some responsibility for food and catering choices during the Transition Program.

Day one.

Clients staff and equipment are transported from MAPPS Head office in inner suburban Melbourne to Lake Eildon. At Eildon, lunch is taken and canoes are packed with necessary gear for a one-night camp out. Clients are provided with suitable

containers and given a brief rundown of the activities. They are then asked to make choices about which items they will and won't take and how each will be transported.

After a few general guidelines on canoeing technique, an eight-kilometre paddle is commenced to an isolated campsite on the opposite side of Lake Eildon. After the campsite has been set up, dinner consumed and a fire prepared, a group session introduces the concept of feelings and in particular, concentrates on the day's activities.

Day one aims to introduce clients to the concept of teamwork and working with others to achieve a goal through a canoeing experience. Personal responsibility is promoted through activities such as packing their own gear, as well as listening and following instructions around stove use and cooking. As noted, their recognition of feelings is a key goal of the program. Most of the clients have never paddled a canoe or cooked for themselves previously, and when put in an unfamiliar situation where they must work with and rely on others, feelings and reactions are more forthcoming. Staff process interactions and experiences as they arise.

Day two.

On day two, we rise early to prepare breakfast and pack-up camp. A short two-kilometre paddle starts the days activities followed by a repacking of the trailer and equipment. A short vehicular transport to the start of the cycling leg, where clients are fitted with a bike and helmet and supplied with a day pack containing a water bottle and japara. After lunch the group sets off on a twenty-five-kilometre bike ride towards their destination deep within the Cathedral Ranges National Park.

Camp Two is setup and dinner is prepared before dark falls in readiness for the Personal Focus Exercise. This involves blindfolding clients before leading them away from camp to a safe spot where they "sit and think" about an issue or topic specific to them. Staff will have previously identified the topics requiring attention for the duration of the weekend. They are individually led out to their spot before dark and collected after about an hour, when it is dark. If the clients wish to finish the activity, they yell their name and they will be lead back to camp to await the rest of the group. The clients are then debriefed around the campfire.

Day two aims to point out the need for others to achieve goals. During the Personal Focus Exercise most report loneliness and need for others and identify behaviours, which may help and/or hinder this. Staff report that the any inconsistencies between the way the clients presented in the Basic Group situation and the Transition Program are beginning to show. These observations will be brought to the campfire sessions.

Day three.

On the morning of day three clients will be supplied with a large backpack and instructed to pack it for an overnight hike. There will be a later than normal start to the day as clients ready themselves for an eight-kilometre walk. Of that eight kilometres, two kilometres is up a steep hill, one kilometre is down a very steep and rocky mountainside, and two kilometres across rocky terrain. The walking is difficult and expected to take approximately six hours. Upon arrival at the campsite, they will make camp and prepare their meals. That night we will run through some of the roping techniques and technology as an introduction to tomorrow's activities and then hold a group meeting. By the time this meeting is held the clients are usually tired and grumpy and more willing to express

their feelings. The primary therapeutic goal will be to focus on the feelings invoked in them and towards others. A secondary goal is to process the consequences of their actions. By this point, staff are able to identify clients who are still operating well within their comfort zones. The design of the abseil activity can be configured to ensure all clients are sufficiently challenged.

Day four.

The clients set camp before a short fifteen minute walk to the abseil site. A safety and activity brief will take place and then clients will be talked through the activity. The aims of the activity are the acknowledgment of feelings, development of trust, and acknowledgment of risk. There will be an activity debrief followed by lunch and then the group will head back to the MAPPS office. Once back in Melbourne, a Transition Program debrief occurs including a goal setting session, and then the clients are picked up. The main aims of day four are to introduce trust and vulnerability to the group, as well as to orient clients toward taking their experiences to Advanced Group, establishing an ethos within which future work can begin.

Ethos.

Ethos is the client's experience of staff and the therapeutic environment. Clients need to be involved in creating an environment that is safe from physical and emotional harm for the Transition Program. It should provide ample opportunities to hear and be heard. If the ethos is correct, clients should feel supported in their attempts to take therapeutic risks.

Process.

The Transition Program is structured in such a way that there are three key opportunities to process the client's thoughts and behaviours.

The first element is the formal time for processing client's thoughts and behaviours is the nighttime group session. These sessions, held around a camp fire following the evening meal are designed to give the therapy staff a chance to continue their formal MAPPS work, and also to address issues that come up for each client during that days activities. Staff have the opportunity to combine their knowledge of the work to date and issues for each client with issues and experiences emanating from the days activities. The second element includes behaviours and expressed attitudes and beliefs are processed as they happen. When an incident occurs or an issue arises, staff can stop the activity and handle the issue at that time. The program is structured to enable staff to do this without missing campsites or putting anyone in a dangerous situation. Activities are designed to be tiring without being gruelling. This is to ensure client safety and ensure that clients are still able to process any feedback or discussion. However, activities are meant to be challenging. By challenging we mean that clients are encouraged to move beyond their comfort zones, intellectually, physically and emotionally. Clients will experience each activity differently depending upon their experiences and needs. This gives staff the opportunity to orchestrate changes in activities to invoke responses that will raise issues and challenge clients. The final element the Transition Program provides an environment that offers the opportunity to observe and reinforce appropriate behaviours. Appropriate

behaviours pertaining to communication, participation, assertion, and consideration for others have been introduced throughout Basic Group. The Transition Program provides the first real opportunity for staff to observe the clients beyond the 'group' setting.

Participants.

All MAPPS clients are on a community (90%) or custodial order (10%). The average age is 16 (range 14-17) and they are all male. The clients who participate in the program are those who have, or are about to complete Basic Group work and are graduating to Advanced Group. For a client to graduate to Advanced Group they are required to successfully complete all work in basic Group and participate successfully in the Transition Program.

Staff.

The MAPPS program runs a small therapeutic team of 3 staff. The staff enjoys outdoor activities but hold no formal qualifications in outdoor education. MAPPS has imported the expertise in the form of a professional outdoor educator who works with the Transition Program on a contract basis. The development of the Transition Program Team has involved the transfer of knowledge and skills in both directions. Whilst staff experience and skills will differ, the key issues of a consistent philosophy and good communication ensure that the team is balanced.

Transition Program Evaluation

The problems associated with evaluating the effects of experiential programmes have been well documented and discussed (Kelk, 1991). In short, traditional, empirical research designs require control of extraneous variables to the extent that, if the research design was adhered to, the experience may not be worth experiencing. If the issue of the over emphasis on empiricism is side stepped, mixed designs also seem to fall short for different reasons. There is uncertainty about what are the relevant outcome variables and how to measure them. There is disagreement as to how to define certain variables for example, empathy. The use of empirical designs has a place and requires further investigation. An example being The Outdoor Experience (TOE) Program's research (Holmes 1996) using the Life Effectiveness Questionnaire developed by the Australian Outward Bound Foundation.

For the purpose of simplicity, MAPPS chose to explore single case designs, as we were primarily concerned with intra-subject change. The case study design is proving useful in situations where it is not possible to establish a true control group. Rather than looking for group change, the focus is upon individual change (Yin 1994). MAPPS plans to conduct client reviews prior to the Transition Program from which specific objectives will be developed for each client. A variety of qualitative and quantitative measures will be employed to detect change depending on the specific objectives. Clients will also complete a number of self-concept and well-being measures for purpose of description and comparison. Clients will be assessed upon their return and at follow-up. It is hypothesised that there will be individual change recorded for each client and that as a group; the change will be in a positive direction. Concurrently, an independent study is proposed to look at consumer satisfaction with the program.

13 Things We have learned or Still Have to Learn

In preparation for this paper, we reviewed our experiences and noted 10 points indicating useful learning or matters still to be resolved.

Organisation.

The MAPPS program operates on limited resources, with staff and equipment on loan from other program areas. Consequently, the Transition Program has had to develop a level of organisational efficiency that ensures that nothing is forgotten and the amount of time required to organise the program is minimal. The Transition Program occurs at set intervals in the MAPPS timetable and utilises a 6-week preplan. The preplan draws upon pre-existing documentation and forms including trip plans, consent forms, and lists of people/agencies that need to be notified. This preplan has had a significant effect on minimising the stress associated with trip organisation for a small program with minimal resourcing.

K.I.S.S.

The K.I.S.S. principle (Keep It Simple Stupid) has always been important for MAPPS. Practical, achievable program delivery will ensure that programmes operate consistently and regularly. By keeping gear requirements, activity complexity, and organisational logistics to a practical level, staff can concentrate on the most important element - the clients' experience.

Whilst on the topic of a client focus, the structure of the program is flexible to ensure that particular client requirements can be met. For example, a client who had special dietary requirements resulted in the program adopting a vegetarian diet. Another client with specific religious observances required a number of modifications to the itinerary. The apparent inconvenience invoked much useful discussion.

Mandatory versus required.

It is Juvenile Justice Departmental policy that clients can not be forced to participate in outdoor activities. Clients are informed that the program is required but not compulsory. Support from family and case managers is sometimes necessary to reinforce the value of participating. The issues around participatory coercion were debated. However, given the view that voluntariness in correctional settings can be a myth, MAPPS adopted the position that honest discussion with clients and their families around the value of participation and pressures on clients to do so, was MAPPS preferred direction. MAPPS staff attempt to address any anxiety the client may be experiencing whilst confronting attempts at avoidance. Staff don't necessarily attempt to eliminate anxiety but at least ensure it is validated.

Client selection.

Client selection has only proven to be a problem when we have not followed our own guidelines. If a client is ready to graduate from the Basic to Advanced group then the correct stage in the change process assures their appropriateness for the Transition

Program. However, the times that staff have advanced someone prematurely or failed to assess their progress accurately, the client has had a detrimental effect on the group. The need for accurate assessment of client progress in treatment is an important target to aim for.

Choice of activity.

One of the positive benefits of adopting the 'therapeutic toolbox' analogy mentioned earlier, is that it became increasingly clear that the type of activity was not that important. Originally the program was structured around the types of activities the staff were qualified to deliver and/or enjoyed. As the staff refined the program and saw the primary benefit of using activities to manipulate the affective experiences of the clients, the type of activity became secondary. Freed from the constraints of being "activity focused", the program was redefined as "client focused" with the additional benefit of being more flexible. Activities can be shortened, lengthened or dropped depending on client need and practical limitations (eg. time and weather).

Staff selection.

Gender balance, the need to have male and female co-facilitators, is an often described prerequisite for groupwork with adolescent sex offenders. The MAPPS program has felt that the need to create an anti-macho ethos to be of greater importance. Therefore, whilst gender balanced staff teams may be seen as desirable, it is considered that a team that provides genuine alternative role models that demonstrate respect, equality, and good communication is of greater practical value.

Selecting staff with outdoor education qualifications is not seen as vitally important given the previously discussed move away from an 'activities based approach'. A staff group who operate within a consistent therapeutic model has proven to be more beneficial than a high degree of outdoor experience (although this as viewed as necessary for safety reasons).

Staff health and welfare.

One of the most significant things MAPPS has learned is that in order to ensure quality of program delivery, the health and welfare of staff is paramount. MAPPS aims for the program to be challenging for the clients but not staff. Staff need to be able to observe and process client issues. This is less likely if staff are too physically or intellectually involved in the activity.

Physical safety.

Physical safety refers to controlling the risks posed a) by the activities and b) by the clients themselves. Competitive risk taking is a phenomenon familiar to most outdoor educators. Apart from the damage to the program ethos, competitive risk taking is a risk to the physical safety of staff. Recognising that people have different tolerances for fatigue and that 'how much you can take' can also be a source of competition amongst staff.

Despite how 'comfortable' staff might feel with their clients, it is safety that demands that you assume the worst (and expect to be wrong) from the clients. It might not be

always possible to predict how a client will react to a situation. Violence against staff may be driven by fear or anxiety. It could be also be planned and therefore, malicious. Whilst, MAPPS has not experienced such behaviour, staff assume that it is possible and take the appropriate precautions. Staff are trained to communicate their concerns and 'hunches' with each as they arise. If something doesn't feel quite right, chances are that it isn't.

Psychological care.

As in all areas of therapeutic intervention, the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of the clients can have profound impacts upon staff. MAPPS employs the use of peer supervision and daily debriefings. Staff have reported negative experiences emanating from the inability to raise their own issues or discuss issues they have observed. Previously, the importance of ethos was discussed in relation to the client group. It is equally important to develop an ethos within the staff team that encourages and supports self-disclosure and positive feedback. On the final day, a debriefing is held for staff prior to everyone departing for home to ensure the following two 'buffer' days are truly work free. MAPPS now strictly enforces staff buffer days (days off). The day before departure is a relaxing preparation day that is void of any other work (ie. client contact and other projects). Following debriefing, staff have two days off ensuring that staff no longer work a 12-day week.

Program culture.

The program culture aims to provide a range of experiences for the client. However discussions with staff and clients have highlighted three factors:

- A program culture that reinforces that it can be safe to take risks. For many this may begin with the realisation that they can extend themselves physically. However, clients report that it's the therapeutic risks that are the most rewarding.
- That participating in the Transition Program is recognition of achievement is a theme that is carried through the program. Recognising and acceptance of praise are skills that are fostered and valued by clients. A positive ethos is required if clients are to move on to the next stage of the change process.
- The hope that things can be different is vital if the clients are to undertake the difficult task of confronting, accepting and challenging their feelings and beliefs associated with sexual offending.

Evaluation.

How to evaluate what we do is an issue that continues to challenge us. A range of evaluation of options have been trialed and dropped some for purely practical reasons. It is extremely difficult to make written observations around a campfire. Whilst we have not yet settled on methodology that we are entirely satisfied with, we are guided by three core principles:

- Knowing what it is that you wish to evaluate. Whilst sounding ridiculously simple, we have found this difficult to implement. For example, the goal to increase empathy was reduced to increasing awareness of the emotional experiences of others.

- Reporting negative results can be just as useful as positive results. Negative results indicate the need to review methodology or the presence of interactions not previously considered the latter being the most exciting.
- Use an applied approach to research design. MAPPS has moved from empirical designs to mixed designs that combine qualitative and quantitative analysis. MAPPS has also moved from evaluating group change to evaluating individual change and using the information to update the program (Action research model).

Research and evaluation is the area that needs the greatest attention. There appears to be many people and agencies using adventure therapy but not enough research is being reported (or undertaken) that involve satisfactory levels of scientific rigour. It is in this direction that MAPPS is currently directing most of its effort.

Risks associated with violent, abusive clients.

A question frequently raised at training is... "Aren't there additional risks taking kids away who have been charged with violent and abusive sexual offences?" Initially this was an issue that we were concerned about. For example, female staff members described concerns relating to spending time in remote locations particularly with young people convicted of rape offences. All staff initially expressed concerns related to working intensively with clients at an affective level... "What happens if you push the wrong button?" Upon reflection, staff concluded that three violence prevention principles used in general group work also applied to the Transition Program:

- Know the client. Good preparation in the form of a thorough assessment is essential for identifying warning signs.
- Establish and reinforce clear boundaries of staff and clients. Consistency is critical.
- Good communication between staff. Violence rarely erupts spontaneously; it merely seems that way when warning signs are overlooked. Clients will always try other forms of communicating their distress before using aggression to make their point.

Public safety.

MAPPS clients are informed from the outset that the programs primary concern is the safety of the community. This concern is reflected generally in the limited confidentiality offered to clients and for the Transition Program, it translates to practical issues. Decisions around campsites, places visited and even where stops are made for toilet breaks, are made with two concerns in mind. Firstly, have we taken all reasonable care to ensure that no members of the public are at risk physically or emotionally from the clients? Secondly, the public image of the program is vitally important. Programmes have been known to close following public outcry over an incident.

Conclusion

Since its inception, the MAPPS program has remained open to options that may induce change in adolescents who commit sexual offences. MAPPS clients comprise a heterogeneous group in relation to type of offence, backgrounds, denial and individual

development. As such, a multi-modal program has had the greatest clinical validity for the MAPPS program. The separation of the MAPPS program into two groups based around a philosophy of change was an important evolutionary step for the program. However, the movement from Basic to Advanced Group became a difficult step for some clients to make. The final decision to use adventure therapy has proven to be rewarding for both clients and staff. The Transition Program appears to offer a range of benefits that have justified its inclusion within the overall treatment framework. The work that lies ahead is to repay the faith the clinicians have with the evaluation results. For now, MAPPS is pleased to have added this particular string to its bow.

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